

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE UTILITY ADVISORY COMMISSION
GARDNER, KANSAS**

Page No. 2021-07
April 1, 2021

The Utilities Advisory Commission of Gardner, Kansas, met in Regular Session on April 1, 2021, at City Hall. Present were Chairperson Kristina Harrison, Vice-Chairperson Jake Wells, Commissioner Bryce Augustine, Commissioner Gary Williams, Commissioner Barbara Coleman, Utilities Department Director Gonzalo Garcia, KCWRRF Superintendent Scott Millholland, Administrative Assistant Erin Groh, and one member of the public.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Kristy Harrison.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Standing approval of the minutes as written for the March 4, 2021, meeting of the Utility Advisory Commission.**

Motion by Commissioner Coleman, seconded by Commissioner Augustine, to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion carried 5-0 Aye

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Consider a recommendation to the City Council for awarding a contract to Haynes Equipment in the amount of \$317,580 for the Kill Creek WRRF UV Disinfection and Recycled Water Systems, Project No. WW2001.**

Scott Millholland, Superintendent for the Kill Creek Water Resource Recovery Facility discussed how the facility has been in operation for approximately 20 years and the current UV disinfection and Recycled Water systems are original and have reached the end of the useful life for this type of equipment. The proposed UV Disinfection System will reduce the amount of electrical consumption while providing improved disinfection of the effluent and the proposed non-potable recycled water system provides a smaller footprint than the existing equipment. These proposed systems will decrease maintenance, require less labor to perform maintenance, and provide greater savings due to lower energy usage.

A total of five responses to the request for proposals were received for the UV Disinfection System and two responses for the Recycled Water System. Utilities staff reviewed the proposals presented by Haynes Equipment for both the UV Disinfection and Recycled Water Systems and agree the equipment provided meet and exceed all of the requirements as set forth in the RFP. Commissioner Coleman asked Millholland if it would have a negative impact on Wastewater's budget and he replied no and stated that it was part of the CIP Projects list and planned for. Commissioner Augustine asked if it would take long to install and Millholland stated that it should take less than a week to install.

Motion by Commissioner Augustine, seconded by Vice-Chair Wells, to forward the recommendation to the City Council to award a contract to Haynes Equipment in the amount of \$317,580 for the Kill Creek WRRF UV Disinfection and Recycled Water Systems, Project No. WW2001.

Motion carried 5-0 Aye

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Project Updates.

Director Garcia gave a brief update on the current status of the Hillsdale Water Treatment Plant Expansion project. The expansion began in late 2019 and the startup will begin the week of April 5th and substantial completion will be at the end of August. It will allow for the production of an additional 4 million gallons per day. The final completion will be at the end of August and they will try and have an opening ceremony at the end of July.

Garcia discussed how there has been a Utility subcommittee formed by City Council in order to review the energy crisis and what impact it has had on the city due to high energy costs and gas prices and how the city will pay for such costs. March 16th was the first date the subcommittee met and it's comprised of UAC Chair Wells and UAC Commissioner Augustine along with Garcia, Business Services Manager Amy Foster, City Administrator Jim Pruetting and Finance Director Matt Wolff as well as City Councilman Mark Baldwin. Foster discussed in the meeting how the PCA works (Power Cost Adjustment) and Wolff presented the amount of additional money that the city will have to pay which is about 5.6 million which includes gas and the additional cost of energy. There was a discussion on how does the city pay the additional cost. The subcommittee decided that the city will wait several months to see what is going to happen with the KCC who is looking into why the gas prices went up before it is determined how the additional cost of energy will impact customers. Garcia thought the city may be able to recover some of the costs through the gas companies. Garcia stated that there is much going on at the state level so it was determined that it is best to wait to decide how the city will deal with the extra energy expenses. Commissioner Coleman asked if the subcommittee had any discussion about how the costs will be pass onto the customers. Garcia stated there are a few ways and some examples are 1) Do a rate study to decide how to reduce the rate which would allow for customers to pay less; 2) A Power Cost Adjustment that is passed onto the customer to pay.

2. Electric Outage Report for 1st Quarter 2021.

2021 First Quarter Electric Outage Report

Director Garcia presented the Electric Outage report for the 1st Quarter of 2021. Electric staff responded to 17 outages affecting 108 customers: 5 caused by equipment failures, 1 caused by trees, 3 caused by animals, and 8 caused by other reasons. The average workday response time was 2 hours and 7 minutes and the average workday length of outage was 2 hours and 20 minutes. The average after-hours response time was 36 minutes and the average after-hours length of outage was 1 hour and 4 minutes. The overall average response time was 1 hour and 8 minutes and the overall average length of outage was 1 hour and 31 minutes.

2021 First Quarter Wastewater Outage Report

Director Garcia presented the Wastewater Collection report for the 1st Quarter of 2021. Line maintenance staff completed 10 sanitary sewer line repairs affecting 12 customers, with 1 being caused by debris and 9 due to residents' issues. The average workday response time was 6 hours and 29 minutes and the average workday repair time was 19 hours and 21 minutes. The average after-hours response time was 18 minutes and the average after-hours repair time was 59 minutes. The overall average response time was 5 hours and 15 minutes and the overall average repair time was 15 hours and 40 minutes.

2021 First Quarter Water Outage Report

Director Garcia presented the Water Distribution Repairs Report for the 1st Quarter of 2021. Line maintenance staff completed 83 water distribution service repairs affecting 485 customers: 6 due to line failures, 5 due to valve failure, 9 due to damage by others, 17 due to residents' issues, and 46 due to other issues. The average workday response time was 43 minutes and the average workday repair time was 15 hours and 53 minutes. The average after-hours response time was 4 hours and the average after-hours repair time was 8 hours and 30 minutes. The overall average response time was 2 hours and 44 minutes and the overall average repair time was 12 hours and 3 minutes. Garcia stated that there was a high number of frozen meters due to cold weather and affected both smart meters and non-smart meters.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Williams asked about where the Utilities Dept. is at with the grease taps (FOG program) and Garcia stated that staff has sent information out to businesses regarding the FOG program (Fats, Oils and Grease) so the program is getting ready to begin.

Commissioner Augustine asked how the Smart Meters are going and Garcia stated that we are about 99% completed with installing the electric smart meters and about 15% done with installing the water meters. We are expected to get the water meters in by late summer. The customer version of the phone app for the smart meters is not available yet but we are hoping to have it in the next month or so.

Augustine asked if there is any new information about the possible rebate program. Garcia stated that he checked with Home Depot to see if Gardner could partner with them. The idea is to have customers take their customer number there and then get a discount on for example a home thermostat and then Home Depot would bill the city. Home Depot's response was that Garcia would have to go through their corporate office and inquire about it. Commissioner Coleman asked if the City would want to ask local businesses to be a part of this program as well and Director Garcia said that Ace Hardware is the next business he would like to ask about it. Much discussion was had about people possibly taking advantage of the rebates and how limits could be set. Garcia said that the hope of setting up a program with businesses is to allow limits to be set on how many rebates each household could receive.

Augustine said that he recently sold a home to a resident and the resident told him that he had to go into City Hall in person to set up his new account for utilities and he was amazed that he was required to go in person. Augustine asked if we could make it easier for residents to sign up for their account online. Garcia said that he thought that new residents could set it up over the phone but he said he would need to talk to Utility Billing and see if an online option could be set up if it isn't yet.

Commissioner Coleman had a few residents contact her to let her know that they had some large increases in their utility bills and they had to come in and set up payment plans and that they have been accommodated nicely with it and it has worked well for them.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Coleman, seconded by Commissioner Williams, to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Motion carried 5-0 Aye

/s/ _____ Erin Groh

Utilities Department Administrative Assistant